**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**May 23, 2021 Day of Pentecost**

**Rev. Amy Pospichal, Pastor Marjorie G. McKenzie, Accompanist**

RH 11 Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!

RH 235 Breathe on Me, Breath of God

RH 100 All Creatures of Our God and King

**Call to Worship**

We come together from many places—

**from north and south, from east and west, just as God calls.**

We come together in one place—

**piece by piece, becoming the Body of Christ.**

We come together in one place—

**not always understanding, not always courageous, not always ready,**

and the Spirit rushes in!

**Let us rejoice, and proclaim God’s power in this place!**

**Opening Prayer**

**Spirit of life, you long for the world’s transformation. Your vision is grander than anything we can imagine, and so we thank you for the privilege of participating in your mission. May these gifts be a blessing that speaks the language of this community, and may that blessing multiply out to every place. Breathe in us again this day, that our whole lives may be an offering for your glory. Amen.**

**Call to Confession**

**Prayer of Confession**

**Creator God, with each breath of life you breathe, you give gifts to your creation, calling us to use your gifts to build up your kingdom on earth. We confess that sometimes we do not see your gifts for the treasures they are. We either take credit for them ourselves, or we dismiss them as not important. We privilege some gifts over others, forgetting that you care about tiny things as much as big things. And when we are called upon to use our gifts for your glory, so often we find ourselves distracted by our own desire and uncertain of your direction. Forgive us. Open our ears to hear you speaking, and our hearts to embrace your purpose.**~silence~ **Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**

This is the promise: “I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh—young and old, men and women, rich and poor—and all people will see.” This promise is for you, and for us. No matter who we are or where we have been, the Spirit of the Living God falls fresh, with mercies new every morning. Know that you are forgiven, and let the Spirit speak through you!  
**In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**\*Gloria Patri**

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen, Amen.**

**Psalm 104:24-34, 35b**

O LORD, how manifold are your works!  
**In wisdom you have made them all;  
the earth is full of your creatures.**Yonder is the sea, great and wide,  
creeping things innumerable are there,  
living things both small and great.  
**There go the ships,  
and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.**

These all look to you  
to give them their food in due season;  
**when you give to them, they gather it up;  
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.**When you hide your face, they are dismayed;  
when you take away their breath, they die  
and return to their dust.  
**When you send forth your spirit, they are created;  
and you renew the face of the ground.**

May the glory of the LORD endure forever;  
may the LORD rejoice in his works —  
**who looks on the earth and it trembles,  
who touches the mountains and they smoke.**I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;  
**I will sing praise to my God while I have being.**May my meditation be pleasing to him,  
for I rejoice in the LORD.  
**Bless the LORD, O my soul.  
Praise the LORD!**

**Prayers of the People**

God of our awakening…

we have named our fears;  
we have named those things  
that hold us back  
and keep us from moving beyond  
where we are.

You have taken our fears…  
our inhibitions…  
and our complacencies…  
and you have invited us  
uninhibited…courageously…  
passionately and COMpassionately  
to fly on the wings of your Spirit.

We look to the sky…  
we look on the streets…  
we look in the alleyways…  
we look in our homes…  
we look to the mountains and the rivers…  
the valleys and the seas…  
we look into the eyes of one another…  
those we know,  
and those we are meeting for the first time…  
we look at individuals,  
we look into communities…  
we look throughout your whole creation…  
and we see potential.

Where there is despair…we see the potential for hope.  
Where there is hunger…we see the potential for satisfaction.  
Where there is war…we see the potential for peace.  
Where there is prejudice…we see the potential for fellowship.  
Where there is oppression…we see the potential for justice.

This list could go on…  
but when we dare to look at the world through your eyes…  
when we make enough room for your Spirit to enter in…  
when we have the audacity  
to trust your perfect vision for creation…  
all there is to see is potential.

So inspire us…  
in the midst of hatred and destruction,  
abuse and neglect,  
natural disasters and human-generated disasters…  
inspire us with the stories of loving and building up,  
respecting and caring,  
helping and sharing and repairing…  
so we may cling to your Spirit  
as she leads us beyond where we are  
into a way of life that reflects your goodness…

just as Jesus prayed…

OUR FATHER…

**Offering**

**Time out for Teaching: 7 Marks of a Vital Congregation (Part III)**

(see handout)

**Prayer for Illumination**

Let the fire of your Spirit shed light on your word, O God. As we open these pages, may we find a breath of fresh air, a word for our hearts, a light for our path. **Amen.**

**Gospel John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15**

26"When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. 27You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

16:4b"I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. 5But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' 6But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. 7Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. 8And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: 9about sin, because they do not believe in me; 10about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; 11about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

12"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

**Ezekiel 37:1-14**

1The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. 2He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. 3He said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?” I answered, “O Lord God, you know.” 4Then he said to me, “Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. 5Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. 6I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.“

7So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. 8I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. 9Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” 10I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

11Then he said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ 12Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. 13And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. 14I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.”

**Sermon “Can These Bones Live?” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

One Saturday in July of 2019, Russell and I drove to Wichita Falls to meet a friend at Opa’s German Restaurant to adopt two dogs. We were adopting a beautiful black lab named Peyton and a white pit bull named Bruce. Bruce was in really bad shape. He had cuts on his head and most of his hair was missing from his face, shoulders and legs. He was confused about everything that had just happened to him. He was scooped up, given a harness, a Starbucks latte and a big bed indoors, probably for the first time in his life. He had been sleeping on sidewalks and surviving on food scraps. He was so skinny you could see his back and rib bones. And to top it all off, he had to go see a vet for that all important “snip snip.” He came to us and we started to put weight on him. We fed him good food, started giving him regular medical care. He played every day with his new best friend, Peyton, who is faster and more agile. But he learned a lot and now he has his own moves. Bruce and Peyton have since become our darling children. We would pull out photos of them like others show off their families. But this is because I got to see what some love and discipline can really do to change a life. Putting the pieces back together again. Bone, sinew and muscle, new life. Joy and fellowship.

When I hear the imagery in Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of the dry bones, I think about salvation of all of God’s creation, and filling all of God’s people with His Sacred breath, the Holy Spirit. It is not just a spiritual healing, however. There is something physical and substantial about this story. Ezekiel has been shown a valley of death. The house of Israel has fallen to the Babylonians and they are in exile there. In that seemingly-God-forsaken land of Babylon, they believe themselves to be as good as dead in God’s eyes. Rejected for their sin. A little like if someone is really angry at you and they tell you, “You are dead to me.” This is how angry they believed God was with them. That they were exiled from their own Promised Land. Without the Lord on their side, some saw little reason to live.

Their fellowship with God seemed empty lately, as if God had left their lives when they were taken captive in Babylon. Not able to gain access to their holy Temple, for it had been destroyed back in Jerusalem, the Israelites felt dead. Being dead to God was even worse than death. It was so bad, that this vision of bones was not just bones. It was dry bones, the kind that have lain there for a long time, forgotten, picked clean by scavengers, bleached by the sun. Traditional Jewish burial rites required the bones of the deceased not to be left out in the open like that, but instead to be “gathered to their ancestors.” This was euphemism for keeping all of their family together, including the bones of their ancestors in a “bone box.” When they were nomadic people, they took these bones with them. They did this with Joseph, in the book of Genesis, for instance.

But not in Ezekiel’s vision. Where the House of Israel looked dead. Ezekiel himself was one of those dead ones. In exile, while sitting along the river Chebar in Babylon, God visits him and takes him on a journey which will charge him an all-important message to Israel. They may think they are dead, but God has not left them alone. God promises to visit them and fill them once more with life. God takes initiative in this vision, as God always does, to make these old bones live. Not just for themselves, but filled with God’s Spirit, moved to be God’s people once again, starting from the inside out, bone to bone, sinew to bone, muscle, and guts. It’s like a radical kind of surgery God performs here like no doctor known on earth. And then to breathe into them new life, fueled by the Spirit of God, not just ordinary breath.

This means that God truly wants them to thrive, not just be alive. Not just a spiritual awakening. And not just a physical one, like waking up from a nap. A physical presence of hope and salvation to this world. Love is God’s motivating factor for making us alive. Restoring us from the inside out. Healing hearts, minds and souls.

God is working on us all of the time, whether we know it or not. Sometimes it can take years to see results. It could even take some time in therapy. God is never going to leave us alone. For God so loves the world, even if we are dead, God takes the initiative to give us new life, a life that goes on to affect other people’s lives too. And we never know how that might be expressed. But that new life we accept can become a light for someone else. As we see in Ezekiel’s vision, God works on us from the inside out.

Today we celebrate that with a baptism. I am so proud that Lucille Andrada has answered that calling. She has felt the movement of the Spirit recently that to me is that “outward sign of inward grace.” As we together baptize Lucille, remember when you were baptized. Baptism is one of the two sacraments we celebrate in this church. Sacrament means “holy mystery” for God’s grace on our lives can sometimes be difficult to explain, even though we can tell it’s there. She is ready, she has been moved by the Holy Spirit to say yes to God. And while we might think, “What took you so long, Lucille?” I think that sometimes it just takes patience, to say yes when the time seems ripe. Sometimes, like a people in exile, we have to wait on God, until we are ready to be saved, scooped up and given a new life.

Can these old bones live? Yes they can. Amen!

**Baptism of Lucille Macedonia Andrada**

**Baptism and Reception of New Member, Lucille Andrada**

Obeying the word of our Lord Jesus, and confident of his promises, we baptize those whom God has called. In baptism God claims us, and seals us to show that we belong to God. God frees us from sin and death, uniting us with Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection. By water and the Holy Spirit, we are made members of the church, the body of Christ, and joined to Christ’s ministry of love, peace, and justice.

Let us remember with joy our own baptism, as we celebrate this sacrament.

**Elder:** On behalf of the session, I present Lucille Andrada to receive the sacrament of Baptism.

Lucille, do you desire to be baptized?

**Lucille:** I do.

Do you, as members of the church of Jesus Christ, promise to guide and nurture Lucille, by word and deed, with love and prayer, encouraging them to know and follow Christ and to be faithful members of his church?

**Congregation:** We do.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

Through baptism we enter the covenant God has established. In that covenant God gives us new life; we are guarded from evil and nurtured by the love of God and God’s people. In embracing that covenant, we choose whom we will serve, by turning from evil and turning to Jesus Christ.

I ask you, therefore, to reject sin, to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, and to confess the faith of the church, the faith in which we baptize.

**RENUNCIATIONS**

Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world?

**Lucille:** I do.

Who is your Lord and Savior?

**Lucille:** Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior.

Will you be Christ’s faithful disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love?

**Lucille:** I will, with God’s help.

**PROFESSION**

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Will you be a faithful member of this congregation, share in its worship and ministry through your prayers and gifts, your study and service, and so fulfill your calling to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?

**Lucille:** I will, with God’s help.

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Eternal and gracious God, we give you thanks. In countless ways you have revealed yourself in ages past, and have blessed us with signs of your grace.

We praise you that through the waters of the sea, you led your people Israel out of bondage, into freedom in the land of your promise. We praise you for sending Jesus your Son, who for us was baptized in the waters of the Jordan, and was anointed as the Christ by your Holy Spirit.

Through the baptism of his death and resurrection, you set us free from the bondage of sin and death, and give us cleansing and rebirth. We praise you that in baptism you give us your Holy Spirit, who teaches us and leads us into all truth, filling us with a variety of gifts that we might proclaim the gospel to all nations and serve you as a royal priesthood.

Pour out your Spirit upon us and upon this water, that this font may be your womb of new birth. May all who now pass through these waters be delivered from death to life, from bondage to freedom, from sin to righteousness. Bind them to the household of faith, guard them from all evil. Strengthen them to serve you with joy until the day you make all things new. To you be all praise, honor, and glory; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns forever. Amen.

**Baptism:**

Lucille Andrada, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**LAYING ON OF HANDS**

O Lord, uphold Lucille Andrada by your Holy Spirit. Give her the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever. Amen.

Lucille, child of the covenant, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism, and marked as Christ’s own forever. Amen.

As members of the household of God, God has called them to serve Christ in the world. Let us welcome them to this ministry.

**With joy and thanksgiving we welcome you to share with us in the ministry of Christ, for we are all one in him.**

**\*Benediction**

**Prayer Requests:**

Betty (Alzheimer’s) and Dolores (paralyzed) – Glenda’s sisters

Betty Flint – fell and broke hip

Bill Humphrey - loss of his wife

Center Street UMC congregation, their pastor and his wife (John and Julie Barrett)

Chris Quintana, Sr. – healing from knee replacement

Dorothy Randals – at Autumn Blessings, for strength and comfort

Elmer Schuster – multiple dental procedures

Fay Birch – stage 4 cancer, prayers for her husband, Larry too

First Responders

Francis – Ryan’s Grandpa – traveling to see family in New Mexico

Juan and Rosa – for better health

Julie Sursa – pain with walking

Lissa – Glenda’s granddaughter (3 months pregnant, health concerns)

Lucy Jasper – Alzheimers/Dementia

Lynn Hawkins – looking for a new home in town

Rain - thanksgiving and please send more :)

Ruth Johnson – for general health

Sharon and Wayne Huffman – general health

Shay – Julie Sursa’s daughter

Students getting ready for end of the semester/graduation

Susie Martinez – may need eye surgery, foot pain, planning for EMS school

Teresa Gallegos-Brake  - healing from heart surgery

Travelers

All those suffering from COVID19, for the recent spike in local cases

**Announcements:**

**PW meeting after church Today!** Bring a sack lunch and we will kick off the 2021 Presbyterian Women season. We have much to talk about. Please come prepared to choose new leadership, hear some reports and talk about whether, when and how we might have a Rummage Sale!

**Session Meets after church next Sunday, May 22nd.**

